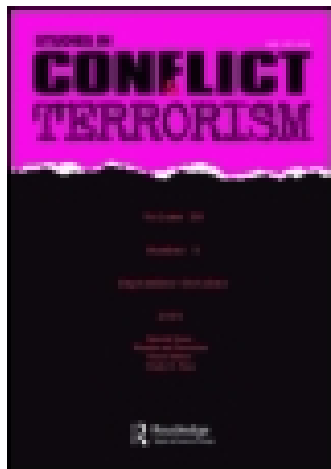


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Understanding the Next Act

Nathan Leites

The Rand Corporation

Abstract The practitioner and analyst of Russian unconventional warfare in 1812, Denis Davydov, distinguished three levels of violence: (big) war, small war, and "burning one or two granaries" (Laqueur 1976, p. 46), for which he had no name and which I shall call small violence, or microviolence; even if passenger terminals of metropolitan airports or 747s were, in the near future, to be substituted for granaries. What differentiates microviolence—a mere quantity—is that with "small war" you may expect to impose substantial attrition on the enemy at least over the long run, and with "microviolence" not even that.

The numerous writings concerned with "urban guerrillas" and modern "terrorists" have focused on what they do, and—to some extent—on what makes them do it: which environments and personalities dispose to microviolence. Even the most sophisticated treatments, such as the recent analyses by J. Bowyer Bell and Walter Laqueur, do not systematically consider *what they thought they were doing, precisely what good it would do*.

To be sure, in some cases where microviolence occurs on behalf of a widely shared cause—usually an ethnic one, whether it be Basque, Palestinian, Irish—a large part of the answer is evident. But what about the Weathermen, the Japanese United Red Army, the Italian Brigade Rosse, the West German Rote Armee Fraktion and June 2 Movement? It is with these that I shall largely deal.

Data on their calculations are meager, and those extant are not easily available. Hence the following pages are a very first approximation, much in need of correction, amplification, further illustration. But as no piece of similar structure has, to my knowledge, been written, the present one might yet be useful. I am aware of the disproportion between the importance of the subjects addressed in many of the following sections on the one hand, and their brevity on

the other hand. But, apart from the faults in what I am saying, this should incite rather than repel.

Not all of the microviolent ones with whom I deal show all of the characteristics I shall describe. It might be a subsequent task to establish major constellations.

Of the factual assertions that enter into the microviolents' calculations, many are, to put it mildly, dubious; often so clearly that I have left it to the reader to note the contrast with reality.

The microviolent ones inhabit a universe of estimates and preferences strikingly different from that of those who devise and execute countermeasures against acts of terror. If some of the latter gained from the following pages a more vivid understanding of their strange adversaries, this study might be of some use.

Sometimes I shall present reactions attributed to microviolent ones as if *they* had written this essay; the context will, I trust, convey this. Emphases, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

In analyses of "terrorists" in developed countries acting on behalf of a radicalism which is little shared, one question has often been slighted: how do they make it plausible to themselves that their acts serve the attainment of their goal? The pages to follow aim at drawing a first map of answers.

The essay was written in early 1977. No attempt has been made to incorporate the evidence which has become available since then.

I. Impacts

Section 1: Bombing into Awareness

"The urban guerrilla," "the first phase of revolutionary war," observes a leader (Renato Curcio) of a group (Brigate Rosse) engaging in microviolence in a developed country (Italy) in the seventies, "is indispensable . . . for enlarging the 'possible consciousness' of the European proletariat . . ." (*L' Espresso*, 2 March 1975, p. 33): a proposition widely accepted in groups of that kind. (They seem to be little aware of Bakunin already having thought so.) The "enlarging" of "consciousness" is to come about in a variety of ways.

First of all, as has very often been noted, by heightening attention to the users of microviolence—to their message.

If a large part of the population, in the belief of many partisans of

microviolence, *should* be hostile to the present shape of things but *isn't*, it is also because a barrier is interposed between the revolutionary message and the people. Acts of microviolence may be intended to break down that barrier; most obviously by coercing the authorities to allow the revolutionaries themselves or their messages access to the media.

It requires, the microviolent ones may point out, an extreme event to induce the media to break silence about them. "As I am nothing," a French anarchist (Leon Lehautier) explained in the late nineteenth century, "if my protest does not entail a scandal which forcibly attracts attention to my grievances, it is as if I were not complaining at all" (Salmon 1959, p. 334). It was the death by hunger strike in prison of one of them (Holger Meins), the leaders of the West German Rote Armee Fraktion (the "Baader-Meinhof" group) point out (while engaged in the same conduct) to a left-of-center news magazine (*Der Spiegel*), which "has broken up the news boycott against the strike." Therefore, "that there are many who wake up only when a person has already been murdered, understand only then what the issue is, is also due to you. Thus *Der Spiegel* has kept silence for eight weeks about the hunger strike of forty political prisoners. . . . Your first report came on the fifty-third day of the strike, five days before the death of Holger" (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 54).

Convinced that the present order cruelly frustrates the interests of most, which could be gratified only by the profound changes they favor, the microviolent ones are apt to take it for granted—in contrast, for instance, to revolutionaries in the Bolshevik tradition—that exposure to their ideas commends conversion to them. Thus the Brazilian "urban guerrillas" in the late sixties found it, in the estimate of a critic-revolutionary (João Quartim), "easy to confuse . . . the publicity which the bombings received with a . . . building up of strength among the people" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 153). The authorities' high attention to us is undoubtedly accompanied by hostility and fear; surely, then, the people's interest in us goes with love and trust.

And it also goes with gratitude in those cases where microviolence leads to benefits bestowed on some among the people; when, for instance, land registers containing the titles of big owners are burned or the rich coerced into donations to the poor; unless the microviolent ones themselves, in the words of a Brazilian (Joaquin Camara Ferreira),

“attack food warehouses and distribute the food among the people; kill cattle and distribute the beef among the hungry . . .” (Moss 1972, p. 200). “The guerrillas,” Bernardine Dohrn remarks about the abduction of Patty Hearst, “have kidnapped the daughter of a rich and powerful man in order to provide food to the poor.” The point of their actions is that it “has unleashed . . . a leap in everyone’s consciousness . . .” (Letter of 20 February 1974, *The Berkeley Barb*, 1-7 March 1974). Microviolent ones may even aspire to instituting multiple reforms by permanent coercion. “The proletarian organization,” explains Horst Mahler, “can impose upon the rich obligations to contribute to collective institutions (nursery schools, health care centers, youth hostels, etc.)”; and “urban real estate can be gradually deprived of its power, rents can be lowered . . .” (Mahler 1971, pp. 32-33).

Or the intention may be to arouse favorable sentiments by exercising vengeance and punishment against the people’s enemies.

Again, microviolence may aim at obtaining documents or confessions compromising the established order (a prominent device of the Tupamaros).

If they are willing to go that far, the people may be expected to reason about those who commit microviolence, there must be much to their cause.

Look at the damage they are willing to *incur*. “By the attitude of the crowd” at the execution of Sofia Perovskaya for contributing to the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, “she understood,” Kropotkin surmised, “that she had dealt a mortal blow to the autocracy, and she read in the sad looks which were directed sympathetically towards her that by her death she was dealing an even more terrible blow from which the autocracy will never recover” (Joll 1964, p. 128). Having on 22 February 1974 sabotaged the meteorological tower at the nuclear plant site of Montague, Massachusetts, Samuel H. Lovejoy explained to a *New York Times* reporter: “I wanted people to think: ‘that guy’s willing to go to jail—these nuclear plants must be heavier than I thought.’” “The fact that . . . dozens of us are prepared to die . . .,” one of the Brazilians who had kidnapped the West German ambassador assured, “penetrates to the population” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 143).

And look at the damage the microviolent ones are willing to *inflict*: their targets must be bad indeed—so it may be hoped that the people will reason—to deserve such treatment. The “systematic sabotage of

American targets, from consulates to factories and officials” would, to a Brazilian (Jamil Rodriguez) be “actions whose function it is to unmask the enemy in the eyes of the masses” and “thus indirectly to transmit a political line” (*Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1611).

Here violence is presumed to be sensed as bad in itself. But it may also be believed to be valued for its own sake by elements of the people—people attracted to revolutionaries precisely because they neither respect the law nor cherish the word (another forgotten idea of Bakunin’s). At the national council of the Students for a Democratic Society at Boulder, Colorado, 10-12 October 1968, “the Mother-fuckers [the SDS chapter from New York’s Lower East Side] argued that militant . . . action could capture the allegiance of . . . drop-outs living in hippie and working class communities who would be turned off by the ‘intellectual bullshit’ of traditional radicals” (Powers 1971, 93). “When I was at Ann Arbor,” Bill Ayres reminisced in the fall of 1969, “all the talk about revolution was in the abstract”; but “since we have moved to Detroit, we have made the revolution real.” Now “the Grease come up to us and say, ‘Hey, aren’t you the guys who beat up the pigs at McDonald’s last night? How come?’ ” The point is that “you understand the revolution when you make the revolution, not when you talk about it” (Powers 1971, pp. 147–48). In fact, “anybody who has been out to a high school, to a drive-in or to a community college in an aggressive and assertive way knows that the people out there loved the fuckin’ action and thought that it was out of sight” (Powers 1971, p. 201). In short, “when you say SDS in Detroit, they say, ‘Oh, they are those broads who beat up guys’ ” (Powers 1971, p. 205).

Those who like nonpolitical violence may have fought *against* those who are prone to the political variety before fighting *with* them. “One Saturday afternoon in the middle of July [1969] about forty members of Motor City SDS had gone to Detroit Metropolitan Beach, known as Metro Beach by the white working class youths who spent weekends there. The Weathermen . . . planted the [Red] flag in the midst of a crowd and began to argue aggressively with the white youths, many of them Vietnam veterans, who gathered around. At one point an angry veteran said, ‘Let’s get the flag’ and a general brawl erupted.” As it should, for “the theory behind the Metro Beach riot : . . . was that working class kids were turned off by sissy intellectuals who talked about fighting the ruling class, but always had some smooth reasons

why the actual moment to fight had not arrived. By . . . proving their commitment by fighting the Weathermen would win the respect of working class kids. A punch in the nose, properly explained, would do more to radicalize the Grease (as working class kids were called) than years of patient explanation. 'It was great' Bill [Ayres] told one friend about the Metro Beach riot. ' . . . The kids love it' '' (Powers 1971, pp. 132–33). 'At the Metro Beach action,' the same participant-observer reports, 'Motor City SDS got into a fight with a gang. But a week later the gang sent a message that they sure did dig beating up SDS, but they also did dig going to Chicago [for the Days of Rage] to beat up some pigs' (Powers 1971, p. 209).

Now that we have employed an extreme means, violence, on behalf of an extreme cause, we have even less than before the right to abandon that cause: in such fashion microviolence may be intended to commit.

It may commit, for instance, in a calculation often attributed to Palestinian "terrorists," fickle Arab governments and publics who may be disposed to abandon the goal of ending the State of Israel.

And it may commit, in the first place, the microviolent ones themselves. 'Middle class in origin,' an observer points out about "white radicals" in the United States of the late sixties, they "were sensitive to the charge that they could drop out of the movement at any moment and resume the . . . privileged lives they had left behind." Now, "realizing this, and perhaps defensive about their own revolutionary inertia, black militants took a certain pleasure in attacking white radicals as summertime soldiers playing at revolution." (Powers 1971, pp. 124–25.) Also, as Bernardine Dohrn recalled (in a statement of 21 May 1970), "the parents of 'privileged' kids have been saying for years that the revolution was a game for us" (Powers 1971, p. 213). "As," according to the observer who quotes this remark, "even the police and the courts seemed to share . . . [this] belief," "there was only one way white radicals could defend themselves against this charge: to become criminals for whom there would be no longer any choice of returning to straight society" (op. cit., 181).

They, by the very same acts, would also in their souls separate themselves even more from that society. They would be able to begin violence because they had already, to a perhaps only slight extent, reduced in themselves the sense that it was forbidden. But it would be the practice of violence that would—should—further enfeeble that inner

obstacle, in a happy circle between violating waning prohibitions and feeling good about it. (Thus Pascal recommended to unbelievers that they start using holy water; thus Giovanni Gentile suggested to Italian fascists that “the act precedes the norm.”)

Leaders may then be the ones who forbid themselves violence least and thus liberate their comrades. “They,” a former member of the Rote Armee Fraktion (Peter Homann) observes about two prominent militants (Ulrike Meinhof and Horst Mahler), “again and again came up against a limit which they at first did not dare overstep: they had internalized bourgeois legality.” But “then,” as the journalist interviewing the former microviolent one remarks, “came Andreas Baader,” who already had a penal record. Yes, “he transmitted the feeling that violating . . . laws is . . . a revolutionary act” (*Der Spiegel*, 25 November 1971, p. 62).

Such was a revolutionary act not only for the violator, but also for the people who will learn about—and from—such an act. For, as Horst Mahler explains, “education in bourgeois society cannot fully extinguish the spontaneous tendency to defend oneself against oppression by force”; “the potential for force of the oppressed is . . . merely tamed, always ready (*auf dem Sprung*) to appear once more in the right direction.” Now “the universality of obedience is an essential condition for obedience being maintained.” Hence, “if that obedience is . . . refused at length and demonstratively, with the claim to violate the law of the rulers in order to realize the higher right of the oppressed,” then “the norm [of obedience] finally loses its general validity. . . .” But “to break the habit (*Entwöhnung*) of obedience with regard to the bourgeois legal order” is “an essential precondition for revolutionizing the masses.” Once again, “it is not a question of theoretical understanding”; rather, “in order to overcome the reflexes of obedience the repeated violation of norms *in deeds* is required” (Mahler 1971, 45–46, emphases in the text). Therefore “we must attack in order to arouse the revolutionary consciousness of the masses,” even though in “so doing we encounter the resistance . . . aiming at the preservation of the painfully acquired psychic equilibrium under oppression.” For “this resistance is the representative (*Statthalter*) of the exploiting system in the heads of the oppressed.” Thus “we throw the bombs aimed at the apparatus of oppression also into the consciousness of the masses” (Mahler 1971, pp. 58–59). “It was,” a former member (Beate Sturm)

of his group recalls, "Andreas Baader's great idea: a criminal deed is already in itself a political deed" (*Der Spiegel*, 7 February 1972, p. 60). "The progressive element of putting fire to a department store," Ulrike Meinhof comments on Baader's first act, "resides not in the destruction of the merchandise, but in the criminality of the deed, in the violation of the law. . . ." (*Konkret*, 4 November 1968). According to the Tupamaros, "the very act of . . . pursuing activities that violate bourgeois legality generates revolutionary consciousness . . ." (Kohl and Litt 1974, 227). "Everything," Kropotkin had remarked, "which falls outside legality is good for us."

Illegal acts are good, not only because they free one morally, but also because they suggest that the destruction of the present order is feasible; they raise a hope that permits desire for another life to unfold. "The consciousness of the necessity to change conditions," Horst Mahler recalls, "is only *one* element of revolutionary consciousness," the other being "the awareness of the *possibility* of revolutionary change" (Mahler 1971, p. 48. Emphases in the text). "The demonstration of the vulnerability of the regime," a Brazilian (Jamil Rodriguez) discerns, "is . . . very important for creating the subjective conditions for the revolt of the masses" (*Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1597). It may not matter so much, with regard to that effect, what the ratio between the losses of authority and rebellion in an encounter is. "How would you evaluate," a Tupamaro is asked about the brief occupation of a town (Pando), "the three dead, sixteen prisoners, the losses of arms and vehicles and the overrunning of your bases or hideouts by the other side?" "These blows," the answer comes, "didn't detract from the fundamental objective achieved by the operation, which were: to demonstrate that there is a guerrilla movement capable of seizing a town . . ." (Gilio 1973, p. 152).

Such a demonstration will also change beliefs about what the current relationship of *forces* between the authorities and the revolutionaries is, (see Section 2) and thereby affect the balance of *preferences* for and against the status quo: one of the several *indirect* ways in which microviolence, in the forecasts of its practitioners, may favorably influence attitudes.

Another indirect way is by rendering middle roads less practicable: adherents to an extreme are apt to be confident that if people only have

the choice between their and an opposed pole, they will largely make the right decision. Within the SDS at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1968 those opposed to violence “insisted that premature action would simply alienate the vast majority,” while those in favor “insisted that action was the only thing likely to create a situation in which radical solutions to American problems would be considered” (Powers 1971, p. 88). To a Montonero the killing of former President Aramburu is useful because it is “pointing up that the country has no . . . alternatives except Peronism or anti-Peronism” (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, p. 304). With a presumption of the potential favor enjoyed by one’s own side it becomes reasonable to envisage “the creation of a climate of tension . . . to propose destroying power stations” (Jamil Rodriguez, *Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1611): a possible rationale behind Giangiacomo Feltrinelli’s death in the process of damaging a transformer near Milan.

A “strategy of tension” (*la strategia della tensione*) has presumably been practiced by Italian fascists since the fall of 1969) may be accompanied by aspirations to reduce the established order’s output of goods and services, always implying that the “system” rather than its saboteurs would be blamed. In a caricature of this orientation a West German (Ulrich Schmücker of the “June 2 Movement”) rendered ticket vending machines of West Berlin subway stations inoperable by clogging up the slots into which coins were to be inserted (*Der Spiegel*, 10 June 1974, p. 33). But it is according to Carlos Marighella himself that “the urban guerrilla should endanger the economy of the country.” Hence it is gratifying to recall that “industrial workers acting as urban guerrillas are excellent industrial saboteurs . . . doing far more damage than a fully-informed layman could do” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 121).

It is implied that “the people,” or at least a substantial fraction of it, is about as ready to sacrifice income to radical change as are the microviolent ones; and that many ordinary persons perceive a self-inflicted damage to current income to be as unavoidable a means for a better life later as it seems to the revolutionaries. These are no doubt estimates distant from realities; and characteristic, in precisely that distance, for many beliefs of microviolent ones about the people to whom they want to be so close. In many respects, they seem to take it for granted that their actions will be understood as they are meant, while, to an observer, this may be far from certain. When on 4 September 1969, 12:30 P.M.

seventy-five Weatherwomen suddenly appeared on the grounds of South Hills High School in Pittsburgh, spray-painted "Ho Lives" and "Free Huey" on the school's main entrance door and then charged inside shouting "Jail Break!" and "Shut down the school!" the high school students, according to an observer, were "mystified . . . they had no idea who the Weatherwomen were or why their school was being invaded" (Powers 1971, p. 141). Brazilian microviolent ones kidnapped first the ambassador of the United States, then a consul of Japan, then the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the envoy of Switzerland: "the diplomats were abducted in the order their countries ranked in investment in Brazil, a fact presumably believed by the kidnappers to be understood by the public, though, in the event "lost on most Brazilians" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 50). Similarly, on the occasion of the visit to Brazil of a U.S. secretary of defense (Robert McNamara), a bomb was set off at the entrance to the Sears Roebuck department store in São Paulo, in view of the secretary's alleged financial connection with that enterprise—again though "no one in Brazil, except the initiated few, knew that McNamara owned shares in Sears Roebuck" (João Quartim in Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 151) and though the microviolent group in question had neither the capacity nor, apparently, the intent to spread that information. Consider in contrast the first would-be assassin of Czar Alexander II, Karakozow, who was much worried lest his act be wrongly understood by the people and wrote a manifesto in simple language designed to explain an act surely less in need of such aid than the piece of microviolence mentioned before.

For the few to exaggerate so greatly how similar the many are to them borders on recognizing the difference, and being indifferent toward it, if not relishing it. British microviolent ones in the early seventies used for one of their groups the assumed name of an obscure nineteenth-century Irish rebel and called themselves The Moonlighters Cell. Presumably they did not care much about—indeed cared much for *not* being understood by those whom they idealized.

With calculations such as the ones described in the preceding pages one may buttress one's confidence that, in the words of Al Fatah, "we shall strike our enemy in order to win our people" (Yaari 1970, p. 113); strengthen one's estimate that, in the assessment of the Tupamaros, "in the Cuban revolution guerrilla war . . . constituted the principal instrument for the raising of the consciousness (*consientisacion*) of the

masses" (Costa, 1972, p. 251); confirm one's intuition that, in Horst Mahler's formula, "the practical revolutionary example is the only path toward revolutionizing the masses" (Mahler 1971, p. 57).

Microviolence is as powerful as words are feeble (see Section 14). "The guerrillas," a Brazilian discerns, "show a method of struggle that raises consciousness more effectively than distributing leaflets" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 391).

More particularly, violence inspires imitation more than words induce acceptance. While "we realize that blowing up a bridge could not be a determining fact for liberation," a Palestinian observes, "yet . . . [it] would recruit ten other people to join Fatah" (Laffin 1973, p. 21). One of the "objectives" of "urban guerrilla" according to Carlos Marighella is "to give proof of its combativeness . . . in order to permit all malcontents to follow our example and fight with urban guerrilla tactics" (Kohl and Litt 1974, pp. 108–9). "Armed actions" for the Weather Underground "are a great . . . example" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 4).

Armed struggle may be made even more attractive by applying high technology. With regard to the kidnapping of one who had prosecuted them (Mario Sossi), a member of a group of Italian microviolent ones (Brigate Rosse) explains that the group had felt "the necessity to furnish to the vanguards an example of organizational capability at a high level" (Gabriele Invernizzi, *L'Espresso*, 12 May 1974, p. 20).

Thus one can resolve the anguishing question whether, in Marxist-Leninist language, the "subjective conditions" for microviolence are present here and now: "by beginning the armed struggle," the Weather Underground explains, "the awareness of its necessity will be furthered" (*Prairie Fire*, 1974, p. 3). "It would be wrong to engage in armed struggle only when the 'consent of the masses' is assured," Horst Mahler elaborates; "for this would mean to . . . renounce this struggle altogether as this consent can be obtained only by the struggle itself" (Mahler 1971, p. 43). True, another West German partisan of microviolence recalls, "an armed struggle can take place only when it is understood by the masses." "But" in its turn, "the comprehension of the masses is only aroused through the armed struggle" (*Agit* 883, 18 June 1970. Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, p. 152).

Any area is apt to be perceived by one disposed to small violence in the light in which his or her continent appears to a Tupamaro: as "a Latin America with a vast explosive potential that had not as yet been touched

off [and which] needed the presence of a . . . a fuse to trigger the explosion . . . all that was necessary was to create the fuse . . .” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 284). Then “a few dozen fighters . . . can unleash an avalanche” (Mahler 1971, p. 43). “The people of Quebec,” a leader of the Front de Libération du Québec (Charles Gagnon) writes from prison in the late sixties, “are angry”: perhaps he is sure they are as angry as he knows himself to be. “Their apparent indolence is but suppressed anger”: the rise, in recent decades of the awareness that a human being can be more angry than he knows, makes it easier to see the other as equalling him in resentment despite the lack of overt evidence to such effect. “It needs only a spark to set [everybody’s suppressed anger] on fire.” And “it is precisely our role . . . to provide this spark” (Morf 1971, p. 91). Mac, who has provided the image, has done it; so have Ho and Fidel; so have the Algerians—so why not we?

Section 2: Altering Beliefs about the Relationship of Forces

“Was the show of strength,” a Tupamaro was asked by a friendly interviewer about one of his group’s sensational actions, “intended to impress your own side or the enemy?” “It was intended,” he answered sagely, “to impress the public, the enemy and us, too” (Gilio 1973, p. 149).

The very fact of microviolence appearing where there was none may for some time reduce the estimate of the authority’s power—and hence prospects—in all strata of the population. Thus microviolent ones may, to start with, set themselves the objective of proving to an often incredulous audience that microviolence is feasible: just that. “Expropriations,” remarks an Argentinian, “serve as a demonstration of efficiency”; the very act of accomplishing them and surviving (in a measure at least) “reveals the effectiveness of a method of struggle” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 382), a “method” that had not seemed available before. “What we do and at the same time want to show,” Ulrike Meinhof explains, “is: that armed conflict can be accomplished [*durchführbar sein*]” (*Der Spiegel*, 18 June 1970, p. 73). “In the first phase” of armed action, Horst Mahler observes, “the task is . . . to demonstrate that armed groups can form and maintain themselves against the apparatus of the State.” In short, “the instrument of armed struggle has to

be discovered practically" (Mahler 1971, p. 43), so as to alter immediately perceptions of the relationship of forces between the authorities and their enemies. "Although the enemy appears strong, he is weak: we are strong"—these words, which the Turkish People's Liberation Army adopted from Mao when it had captured four U.S. airmen, may have been thought and spoken by many microviolent ones in diverse times and places when they had destroyed or subdued a fraction, however small, of the enemy. As long as such an act had not often happened close by in time and space, as long as it had not yet ceased to evoke shocked surprise (delighted, horrified, curious), the astonishing quality of the event—authority struck down or coerced—suggests a sharp change in relative power between the Establishment and its enemies. There may then be a sense of a serious competitor to the existing order having suddenly emerged, awesome in its rapid rise from nothing; and vulnerable to return to nothingness if it can't continue delivering a high performance so as to live up to a suddenly acquired respect.

Also, a microviolent group, having committed a striking act, may be known to absorb, for some time at least, the attention and action of the authorities' top level: surely an organization producing this effect possesses high power. When a group such as the Russian "terrorists" of the late nineteenth century, in the words of an observer close to them (Stepniak), appears to have "compelled the Government for many years to neglect everything and do nothing but struggle with them" (Moss 1972, p. 40), the attribution of great strength to them is for many difficult to avoid.

Sometimes the microviolent ones intend to reinforce such a belief by stressing the very smallness of their resources. "For the past month and a half," declares the Turkish People's Liberation Army, having captured four U.S. airmen, "the police . . . has bowed to a handful of our fighters." At other times, however, a microviolent group may desire to have its resources and capabilities exaggerated (see below), as well as the population's favorable reactions to it. "Helmut Schmidt," argue the leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion, "would not in his new year's allocution have included the actions of the RAF under the five most threatening facts/developments for imperialism in 1974—world inflation, the oil crisis, Guillaume, unemployment, RAF—. . . if revolutionary politics had only a very small basis. . . ." (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 56).

In any case, the quality of the microviolence committed may be unquestionably high (see Section 1), which by itself suggests power. "The action," says a left Peronist (Hector Victor Suarez) about an operation (occupying the town of Garin) of his group (FAR), "impressed the people because of the synchronization and technical resources involved" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 382).

Both the authorities and the media tend to exaggerate the capabilities and the future acts of a microviolent group under the impact of a blow struck by it. While the membership of the Quebec FLQ perhaps never exceeded 150, a federal minister claimed shortly after the group's two kidnappings of prominent persons that it had about three thousand members and two thousand pounds of dynamite, "enough to blow up the center of Montreal" (Moss 1972, p. 128). The group itself was of course eager to foster such exaggerations, suggesting no doubt to one of its hostages, a minister of the province, a letter to his prime minister according to which "we are facing a well-organized escalation. . . . After me there will be a third one, then a fourth, and a twentieth. If all political men are protected they will strike elsewhere, in other classes of society"—while in fact, of course, the FLQ never struck again.

When microviolent ones—to mention one factor fostering exaggerated forecasts about their deeds—expose categories of persons who had not felt before that they were living under risk, to even a *small* probability of *high* damage, they may arouse high anxiety—which in turn may induce an excessive estimate of the chance that one will in fact be hurt. "We have wanted to demonstrate to the nation," declares the right-wing Italian Ordine Nero, having bombed a leftist mass demonstration (in Brescia) "that we are capable of placing bombs where we want, at any hour, in any spot, where and when it pleases us" (*L'Espresso*, 11 August 1974, p. 6). The same formula was used a few months later with regard to the bombing of a passenger train. While such words are compatible with a low frequency of attacks (which turned out to be the case), they do suggest a high incidence (that is, a sharp change of the relationship of forces in disfavor of the status quo); and they are apt to activate the translation of the quality of fear into the quantity of risk.

Replacing unavailable quantity by suggestive quality, a microviolent group may engage in acts that one ordinarily expects only of government. They then intend to make believe that there is "dual power"; rapidly and easily achieved and hence rendering the next jump to

dominance plausible. "When we decide to raid the home of a political police agent," a Tupamaro explains, "it's our way of showing them and the people that there are two powers . . . that just as our homes can be raided, so can those of the security agents" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 281). In "the building of dual power," another Tupamaro discloses, "the first step . . . was to look for a type of military action that showed that we were a force able . . . to administer justice"; "this was the origin of the People's Jail" (Wilson 1974, p. 146). For "the keeping of prisoners . . . implies a power equal to the regime" (Wilson 1974, p. 142). Even more so when the latter seems to acknowledge that an unexpected equal has appeared within its domain: when the director of a major state-owned public utility enterprise was abducted, for the second time, by the Tupamaros and sentenced to life imprisonment in the People's Prison, the president, two months later, appointed a successor for the vacancy (Moss 1972, p. 229); the same Pacheco who had forced the media to sharply curtail mentions of the "terrorists" and had banned both the official name (MLN) and the popular one. In a move of the same order the Italian Brigade Rosse made it known that, having abducted a prosecutor (of them), they had interrogated him and obtained the names of penetration agents within their group (*L'Espresso*, 5 May 1974, p. 15).

Section 3: Destroying the Enemy through One Strike

"The chemist," a Weatherwoman recalls about a comrade, "drove us to the mountains once a week. Anne and I planted our fertilizer under bridges and tree stumps, under rocks and beside streams. In the still mountain darkness we lit homemade fuses and detonators. Then we ran and hid. Great explosions rent the air, and big craters replaced the rocks and bridges and tree stumps. We had visions of IBM and Boeing going up in pieces . . ." (Stern 1975, p. 262). As modern society appears more complex and fragile, modern weapons more impressive, and their application to the centers of developed countries surprising—as these several trends join—microviolent ones may permit themselves the idea of bringing down the existing order by one blow, the counterpart to the all-out strike of some planners of nuclear war. "Through guerrilla struggle," in a rather moderate West German estimate, "a few thousand—if necessary without the support of industrial workers—can

considerably weaken the imperialist system in the metropolises . . .” (A leaflet of the group Rotzkast, 1971, Mahler 1971, p. 71). Striking at the enemy’s head will increasingly incapacitate his entire organism: “we who live in the head [of world capitalism] must . . . confuse his nerve centers . . .” (ibid., p. 71). “Our intention,” announces the Weather Underground, “is to disrupt the Empire . . . [ellipsis dots in the text–NL] to incapacitate it . . .” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 1). “Now things must explode (*muss das krachen*), society must go to pieces (*zerbrechen*),” resolves a West German given to picturesque formulations (Fritz Teufel) (*Der Spiegel*, 4 January 1971, p. 48). If the enemy’s destruction won’t come instantly, then by avalanche: according to Sam Melville’s estimate of microviolence, “it will snowball and bring down the power structure” (Melville 1972, p. 140)—mined as it allegedly is by the latent hostility of most, perceived on the model of one’s own flagrant aversion.

Section 4: Slowly Exhausting the Enemy through Attrition and Stress

“The mountain of the military potency of the bourgeois State,” declares Mahler, alluding to a famous use of a Chinese legend by Mao, “‘must be levelled’” (Mahler 1971, p. 28): it may, it is implied, take decades, but what does that matter? (This is a characteristic stress on “protracted” struggle, which, I would surmise, wards off the microviolents’ impatience.) “We shall,” a Palestinian declared in the mid-sixties, “burn citrus plantations, demolish factories, blow up bridges, and cut off communication lines. The revolution will last a year, two years and more, up to twenty or thirty years” (Yaari 1970, p. 53): look at Algeria, China, Vietnam.

There is no alternative. “It will,” the Weather Underground declares, “require lengthy . . . armed struggle . . . to wear away at the power of the enemy” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 2). According to a Montonero, “the enemy army . . . can’t be defeated in frontal combat,” but it “can be worn down over a long time” (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, p. 306). “The only way to destroy the enemy,” George Habash discloses to Oriana Fallaci, “is to give a little blow here, a little blow there; to advance step by step, inch by inch, for years, for decades . . .” (*Life*, 22 June 1970). While there will be a “final state” of “general

insurrection," it is only by a "lengthy" armed struggle that the enemy can be "progressively enfeebled (*zermürben*)" before he is "finally smashed" (Mahler 1971, p. 8).

But during such a protracted conflict, will the enemy not be able to replace the resources of which he is being deprived?

No, for physical attrition will be accompanied by an even more important moral one that, it is implied, can be achieved with even less force.

The personnel of the state, accustomed to dish it out, will be permanently demoralized by now *having to take it*—never mind (it is implied) how much and how often; and that from elusive attackers who "harass" the authorities, "work on their nerves through . . . small damages" (George Habash to Oriana Fallaci, *Life*, 22 June 1970).

These damages are also "unexpected" (*ibid.*); their ever-present possibility induces unremitting *anxiety*. One of the "objectives" of "urban guerrilla," according to Carlos Marighella is "to oblige the army and the police . . . to change the relative comfort and tranquility of their barracks and their usual rest for a state of alarm and growing tension in the expectation of attack." "The government," too, will then be living with "ever present fears of an attack on its strategic nerve centers, without ever knowing where, how and when the attack will come" (Kohl and Litt 1974, pp. 108–9).

A very few attacks affecting but a minute fraction of the authorities' personnel will, it is implied, suffice to arouse high and protracted anxiety in the Establishment at large; whether its members are highly sensitive to even a small probability of high damage, or whether they exaggerate (also, driven by that sensitivity—see Section 2) how much their enemy will presently proceed to do. One way or the other, it seems feasible to produce with sparse resources a state in which "nowhere will there be a pacified domain for officers and leading officials, a secure rear, a peaceful *Heimat*, a safe private life" (Mahler 1971, p. 42). "The execution of important members of the repressive hierarchy" a Tupamaro observes, or alleges, "created confusion . . . within the army whose members were accustomed to a non-militarized *civilista* role." For "these army personnel were now faced with the possibility of . . . death . . ." (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 305).

In addition to anxiety, there is the effort and discomfort of the permanent *alert*, the defensive living that the microviolents expect to

impose on the authorities. "You will sleep in your uniforms," the "Stern group" announced to the British military in Palestine, "you will bear your arms, your life here will be hell day and night . . ." (Hyams 1974, p. 160). "Already," the Turkish People's Liberation Front discerned upon having captured four U.S. airmen, "from the police to our president, no one sleeps easily in their homes; they cannot come and go comfortably to their homes."

Finally, there is the *frustration* that elusive microviolent ones expect to impose on their targets, whom they show to be powerless as much as they prove them helpless. One of the "objectives" of the "urban guerrilla," according to Carlos Marighella, is to engage the authorities permanently in "a search for tracks that vanish without a trace" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 109).

The combined effect of these various torments will be "a gradual attrition (*Auszehrung*) of the enemy's forces, degradation of morale (*Verschleiss*)" (Mahler 1971, p. 28), "the disorganization and demoralization of the oppressor's armed forces by a lengthy extenuating (*zermürbend*) small war" (Mahler 1971, 31).

Section 5: Practicing for the Final Battle

Agreeing with revolutionaries in the Bolshevik tradition that the "seizure of power" will require "armed struggle,"—"in the ultimate conflict between the classes only guns count" (Mahler 1971, p. 41)—the microviolent ones may affirm that this final encounter calls for protracted practice that should begin "here and now." According to Horst Mahler, "a fighting group can originate only in the fight itself" (Mahler 1971, p. 65). For the Weather Underground it needs "guerrilla action" to "lay the foundation for the decisive armed struggle" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 23); "the mass armed capability which will destroy the enemy has its beginning in armed action" (Mahler 1971, p. 2), of initially, it seems implied, very small size. Conversely, it is "from the very beginning of guerrilla action" that "mass armed capability develops" (Mahler 1971, p. 141).

Thus the microviolent ones seem to apply to fighting the contemporary disposition to believe that so many acts, which were earlier regarded as capabilities available to human beings without previous practice, do in fact require just that. So much has to be learned, and one learns only by doing.

The new belief can be smuggled into formulations that at first sight resemble the conventional wisdom of, say, the Austrian social democrats. In the early twenties they created a military organization for possible defensive use (to occur in the following decade). But they did of course not maintain that an endemic civil war would be required from the start to have the Republikanische Schutzbund become efficient by virtue of permanent practice. In ostensibly similar fashion the Weather Underground observes that “the mass armed capability which will destroy the enemy . . . will not spring fullblown on the scene at the magical moment of insurrection” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 2). “I am tired,” a Venezuelan elaborates,

“of hearing the . . . threats which the revolutionary parties make when limiting themselves to legal struggle: they would revert to violence if they were declared illegal. . . . Sooner or later they are declared illegal . . . and they don’t do anything . . . ; or they try to do something and the enemy acts faster than they do. This is explainable. The enemy has counted on apparatuses trained in violence for many years. . . . One cannot suddenly defeat them. . . . One cannot think that when the revolutionaries resolve to use violence—those revolutionaries who until a short time ago were speaking of legality . . . the popular masses . . . are going to defeat such a powerful apparatus. Popular violence cannot be improvised. . . . It should be *organized* patiently” (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, pp. 240–41).

“To leave people *unprepared* to fight the State [in the final encounter] is to mislead about the inevitable nature of what lies ahead” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 141). Commenting on the first proclamation of the Rote Armee Fraktion, *To Build the Red Army*, Ulrike Meinhof explained the new group: “Name: ‘To Build the Red Army’ . . . a sentence. It says what we do” (*Der Spiegel*, 18 June 1970, p. 73)—which, in the usual nonviolent sense of *aufbauen* (build) it precisely did not.

In an overt formulation, “it is,” according to a West German, “our duty to begin already today *practicing* (*Einübung*) the armed struggle” (*Agit* 883, 24 December 1970. Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, p. 157). “There is a . . . necessity . . . to learn to fight through fighting” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 10). If this truth is heeded, then, according to a Québécois (Pierre Vallières), “at . . . [the] point . . . of armed confrontation between the people and their enemy . . . the revolutionary forces will have had their training in their daily struggle” (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, p. 324).

Accordingly, early in September 1969 seventy-five Weatherwomen drove to Pittsburgh for an action "intended as a practice run for Chicago [the planned 'Days of Rage' in the first half of October]" (Powers 1971, p. 140). And on September 27 of the same year there was an SDS rally outside Detroit's public library "which, like the Pittsburgh High School raid was intended as practice for the 'Days of Rage' " (Powers 1971, p. 146).

Surely only live practice is effective against inhibitions. "This beginning [of guerrilla activity]," as the Weather Underground looks back at its own career, involving "a confrontation with . . . inhibition . . . was impolite, rough, destructive and disorderly" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 10). When in February 1970 the Weatherwoman Diana Oughton went to see an old friend in Ann Arbor, "Mrs. Howes said the Chicago action [the 'Days of Rage'] had struck her as simple hoodlism, which would only alienate potential allies. Diana admitted it might, but insisted it was a necessary step . . . 'People have to learn to confront violence' . . ." (Powers 1971, pp. 176-77).

Section 6: Setting Enemies to Fight among Themselves

Acts of microviolence, their proponents point out, are apt to become major occasions for conflict within the ruling group: its various factions, rather than closing ranks, may quarrel about what allowed such acts to occur, how they were handled, and how they should be: all of which may be both genuine issues and pretexts in struggles for power. Thus an objective of the Tupamaros at one point was "to sharpen the contradictions within the government" between the advocates of a "hard" and of a "soft" line toward them. A Brazilian recalls, "Every mistake of the regime [on the occasion of violence directed against it] is exploited by those who, within the ruling group, want to assume 'the responsibilities they merit'; this provokes multiple administrative and ministerial changes, and is useful to us in all respects: 'when two thieves fall out, the honest man can only gain,' says the proverb" (*Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1597).

Section 7: Diverting Resources of the Enemy from a More Important Front

Even though it may be recognized that the enemy won't have to reallocate its resources noticeably as a consequence of one's micro-attack on

it, one may feel a moral obligation to help "Vietnam" in this fashion to the maximum of one's capacity, be it only little above zero (see Section 11).

The same calculation may be applied to one's relationship with nonviolent revolutionaries. "For those who hold up to us as an example the successes of mass organizations in the working class" a Brazilian explains, "we recall . . . that their work is only possible because we, the armed organization . . . concentrate the forces of repression on us" (Jamil Rodriguez, *Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1593).

Section 8: Showing How Harmless the Enemy Is

According to the extreme Zionists in late World War II and during the years of the British presence in Palestine following the war, the moderates overestimated the damage to Zionism that would follow from the British response to a sharpening of the Zionist line. One of the motives for the violence employed by Irgun/"Stern Group" against the British was to show the limits to the British response, thus to liberate mainstream Zionists of their excessive fears, and allow them to act more assertively.

Section 9: Showing How Bad the Enemy Is

"During the summer of 1970 the young men [of the Front de Libération du Québec who were to kidnap the British trade commissioner James Cross] discussed abducting several people, among them [Montreal] U.S. Consul General John Topping." But "the day before the planned kidnapping they chose Cross over Topping because 'we figured the English in Quebec would never identify with an American, but if we took the Englishman, we thought it would stir more *hostility* from the English in the province and across Canada . . .'" [*Weekend Magazine*, supplement of *The Toronto Globe and Mail*, 22 January 1974, p. 2] hostility that would, it was hoped, lead to federal repression in Quebec and that would in turn stimulate Québécois separatism. For a "basic principle of revolutionary strategy" is, in the words of Carlos Marighella, "to release such a volume of revolutionary action that the enemy will be obliged to transform the political situation into a military one"; for "then dissatisfaction will reach all the strata of society" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 82). Prior to the provoking of microviolence the badness of the present order may have been fully visible only to the

trained or passionate eye of a few; the reactions of the authorities, which that violence is intended to induce, will render their evil nature obvious to the many. The point is, in Ulrike Meinhof's calculation, as paraphrased by an associate, "to provoke the latent fascism of society, to bring it to the light, to force society to unmask itself" (Rühmkorf 1972, p. 228). Violence operates, in words circulated in prison by the leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion so that "the pigs' true mug comes to the surface, they are forced to renounce their ideology themselves" (*Dokumentation* 1975, p. 163). Thus, according to a Brazilian, "the political value of the guerrilla's actions derives not from its popularity, but from the unpopularity of the ensuing repression" (Jamil Rodriguez, *Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1597).

So sure are revolutionaries inclined to microviolence of that unpopularity and of the damage from it to the establishment that they are apt to neglect the persisting disposition of men in power to instigate small violence against themselves, so as to benefit from revulsion against it as well as from the repression with which they intend to respond to it. "The old strategy of tension [presumably followed by elements of the Italian Right from the fall of 1969 on]," an observer explains in the mid-seventies, "operated on the basis of three suppositions. First: Italy believed that it is the anarchist Valpreda who has placed a bomb in the Bank of Agriculture [in Milan, 12 December 1969]. Second: this conviction creates a mood hostile to the Left. Third: in this mood a coup d'état from the Right, managed or supported by the military, is well received or at least provokes only limited reactions, which are easily controllable" (Fabrizio Dentice, *L'Espresso*, 11 August 1972, p. 4).

In contrast to such good sense—with the decisive exception of the belief that one will easily be able to impute one's own deeds to another—those tending toward microviolence may be convinced that many of the people will be unhappy with the government's response to microviolence and blame the authorities instead of the rebels for it; rather than, for instance, condoning or even welcoming restrictions on everyone's liberties in response to violence; or at least blaming the violent ones for having unleashed their enemies. If the aim of the Québecquois kidnappers of 1970 was to force the government to take extreme measures, then in that they succeeded—falsely predicting, however, a predominantly negative reaction of at least the francophone population to "extreme measures" against the terrorists.

Also, the microviolent ones may not consider whether the benefit to them from a popular revulsion against the extreme response they will have provoked might not be smaller than the loss to them from the repression included in that response. In several and well-known recent cases that loss has amounted to annihilation (e.g., in Brazil and Uruguay).

Finally, it might be overlooked that the authorities may limit themselves to repression directed against the microviolent ones without touching the rest of the population much and that this repression might be effective while not harsher, perhaps indeed less severe, than what "public opinion" demands. The West German microviolent ones may not have foreseen that the SPD-FDP government, on the occasion of the coercive hostage taking in the FRG embassy in Stockholm in 1976, would be moved to substitute a no-concessions policy for the former safe-release policy also from concern for the coming election: it is the voters who were believed to demand, in their majority, a hard line, which, they correctly perceived, would scarcely affect them. In contrast, the microviolent ones often take it for granted that they and the public at large cannot be separated as targets. When "the government," conforming to the intent of its enemies, "has no alternative except to intensify repression," then, according to Carlos Marighella, "the police networks, house searches, arrests of innocent people and of suspects, closing off streets, make life in the city unbearable" (Kohl and Litt 1974, pp. 131–32).

Those given to violence seem indeed apt to exaggerate in various ways the bonds between them and the population.

This is presumably what permits them to orient so much of their operations on their own concerns rather than responding to aspirations outside of themselves. It is rare to find a group such as the "Trotskyite" ERP in Argentina, which for a time concentrated on kidnapping business executives so as to coerce their companies to distribute food and clothing to the poor as well as exercise books and pencils to their children, to rehire discharged workers, and to improve the conditions of those employed. More frequently one finds in coercive hostage taking a set of demands such as that formulated in Communiqué No. 1 of the Montreal FLQ of 5 October 1970: the authorities should cease all efforts to liberate the hostage taken, give the kidnappers access to the media, release "political" prisoners, provide aircraft for conveying the kid-

nappers to sanctuaries, deliver cash, disclose informers—and rehire certain workers: the only demand not directly concerning the microviolent ones themselves, and also the one that they waived first in the ensuing negotiation with the authorities. When the Tupamaros' program consisted of six points, "the release of all imprisoned comrades" was the first, the "unfreezing of wages" arriving second (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 276). On 31 January 1974, two Japanese belonging to the United Red Army and two Arabs of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine tried to blow up a Shell Oil Company refinery in Singapore. They failed, and with this their interest in the world outside them ended, as far as their operation went. For they then seized eight hostages aboard a ferryboat and threatened to kill themselves as well as the hostages unless they were given *safe passage* to an Arab country. On February 6, five PFLP members took over the Japanese Embassy in Kuwait, seized about twelve hostages including the ambassador, and demanded that the Japanese government supply an airliner *to bring their comrades* from Singapore to Kuwait; which was done. After picking up the other five, who had released their hostages, the plane went on to Aden on February 8, where *everybody was freed*. When West Germans kidnapped a West Berlin politician (Peter Lorenz), their only approach to the interests of the public at large was the mailing of bank notes to the mother of a mongoloid child, with a note, "Dear Frau Busch, we are the abductors of Herr Lorenz. Now don't get scared" (*Der Spiegel*, 4 August 1975, p. 53).

A considerable fraction of the targets consists, to be sure, of persons who have damaged other microviolent ones.

The names of microviolent groups are apt to refer to incidents in their war with the authorities and hence be unintelligible to almost all: the West German "June 2" group alludes to 2 June 1967, when a student was killed by police in West Berlin; the Greek "October 1" group to the date on which Greece surrendered a West German fugitive to the FRG, while the Spanish group naming the same date (GRAPO) commemorates the execution of five in 1975.

That such self-centeredness becomes possible by a belief in one's small and secret group being the object of mass love is shown, for instance, when Ulrike Meinhof explains why the Rote Armee Fraktion chose as its first deed the liberation of Andreas Baader: "We believe that those to whom we want to make it clear what is politically at issue today

have no problems whatsoever in identifying themselves with the liberation of prisoners.” “That part of the proletariat of which we believe that it is potentially revolutionary,” she repeats, “has no difficulty in identifying itself with the liberation of prisoners . . .” (*Der Spiegel*, 15 June 1970, p. 74). People at large, microviolent ones may manage to believe, care almost as much about the repression befalling “terrorists” as if it were inflicted on themselves. “Many,” the leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion advance, “[who] changed their attitude towards this State because of the measures of the government against us, begin to recognize it for what it is . . .” (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 55). It is as if what happened to the few of us had been suffered by many. “Revolutionary terrorism,” a statement by the Tupamaros explains, “is . . . the guerrilla’s response to the terrorism the people daily receive from the hands of the servants of the ruling class. It is repayment for the people being harassed in the streets, having their homes invaded in the early morning hours, seeing suspects being tortured, raped and murdered during police questioning” (Wilson 1974, p. 76).

If indeed the microviolent ones are the center of the people’s concerns, then the group’s communications may be focused not on the aspirations of ordinary individuals, but rather on the special situation of these exceptional few. Item “I” in the “daily schedule” recommended by Ulrike Meinhof from prison for persuasion outside of it is “daily militant actions . . . for ‘freedom for all imprisoned revolutionaries—an end to torture by isolation—away with all special measures in the prisons—long live the RAF!’ ” As if this were not enough, she continues for the case that “you want to say one more word”: “then talk about what is just now timely: ‘Berlin justice wants to assassinate the prisoners engaged in a hunger strike.’ ” Indeed, “the number of actions cannot be large enough and they cannot be militant enough as long as all prisoners are not liberated” (*Der Spiegel*, 2 June 1975, p. 29).

Naturally, then, the strength—even the existence—of ordinary interests may be overlooked (see Section 1). When Brazilians, on the occasion of Robert McNamara’s visit, set off a bomb at the entrance of the Sears Roebuck store in São Paulo, not only did they credit the population with a knowledge of the secretary’s personal portfolio (as I already remarked), they also perhaps forgot what a friendly critic (João Quartim) reminds them, namely that “Sears, like all the big stores, sells its goods cheaper than the small shops. Closing it down for a few days

meant upsetting the local housewives . . .” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 152).

Section 10: Coercion to Reduce the Enemy's Resources and the Efficiency of Their Use

Attributing to themselves a capacity for unleashing the enemy to their own advantage (Section 9), the microviolent ones may also believe they know how to leash the enemy.

First, the enemy supposedly can be deterred through reprisals. When in late 1946 two members of Irgun were sentenced by the British to be flogged and one of them was, the Irgun in turn captured and flogged four British military men; the second Irgun prisoner was not flogged, nor was any subsequent captive of the British. When several Irgun members were sentenced to death, Irgun captured British officers and officials, and held them until the death sentences were in fact rescinded. When the British hanged two Irgun prisoners, the Irgun hanged two British sergeants, and the British hanged no more. One of the objectives of “kidnapping” according to Carlos Marighella is “to force the suspension of torture in jails” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 120). “Pereira Reverbel,” declared the Tupamaros on 7 August 1968, having abducted that prominent personage, “with his person will guarantee the physical well-being of our comrades and of all those who are being persecuted. . . . The physical security and well-being of Pereira Reverbel will depend upon the conduct of the repressive forces and Fascist groups in their service; . . . we are attentive to the methods they employ” (Carlos Alonso in *Sucesos Para Todos*, Mexico, 18 July 1970, translated in JPRS 51529, p. 58). “We shall,” announced a “commando” of the Rote Armee Fraktion, having wounded a judge and his wife, “execute attacks with explosives against judges and prosecutors as frequently and as long as they will not have ceased to violate the laws at the expense of political prisoners” (*Der Spiegel*, 24 June 1974, p. 29).

Second, those disposed to microviolence may direct their attention to the large number of persons who each make a small contribution to the enemy's strength (the total being considerable) and who are loath to accept even a *low* chance of *high* damage from their activities. But microviolence may produce just such a chance and thereby significantly (in the expectation of “terrorists”) reduce both the amount of resources

at the enemy's disposal and the efficiency with which they will henceforth be used. The microviolent ones may foresee that the persons thus exposed to novel risks will not, even with time, come to accept them; and/or that the operation for which the risks are created will be completed before the targets get accustomed to them.

These targets may be viewed as foreigners whose departure one desires to compel, such as colonials in a colony. "Because of the Fedayeen," an Arab statement foresaw, "Israelis will swarm to the sea and airports . . ." (Schiff and Rothenstein 1972, p. 74). An announced purpose of the Front de Libération du Québec was "to make them [the Anglophones] go home . . . to Ontario or Great Britain or the United States" (Saywell 1971, 134).

Microviolence may be intended to isolate the target area from the rest of the world. It is with this intention that Poder Cubano has committed thousands of microbombings of hundreds of travel agencies, airline and steamship line offices, consulates, and exhibits. And it is of course thus that Palestinians have acted to isolate Israel. In the words of George Habash, "Israel is an island. Its only connections are through the sea and the air. We must orient our strategy toward this" (*Der Spiegel*, 1970, no. 10, p. 106).

Within the target area, previously riskless activities favoring the status quo may be made risky so that they might be abandoned in some measure. "We ask of Springer," declared a group after an attack on that publisher's building in Hamburg, "that his newspapers stop his . . . campaign against the New Left, against strikes, against the Communist Party here and in other countries" (*Der Spiegel*, 24 June 1974, p. 29). "In numerous German cities the police has recommended to cinema owners to cease showing Warner-Columbia's film on Entebbe in order to avoid . . . further arson and bombing on the part of unknown perpetrators who designate themselves in anonymous letters as 'Revolutionary Cells' and as 'Fighters for a Free Palestine.' Many cinemas, for example in Aachen, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Köln, Stuttgart and Munich have followed the advice of the police and changed their program" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 January 1977, p. 3), two months before the showing of *God's Messenger* was temporarily interrupted in American cities.

Burdening the activities of the authorities' civilian and military personnel with fear is to suggest a negative answer to the question: "Where

can the State find the tens of thousands of heroes ready to fight under such anxiety?" (Mahler 1971, p. 42).

Resignations may then prevail over entries: "those who see a cushy job in being a policeman or a soldier will increasingly understand the risk which this profession entails under the changed circumstances" (Mahler 1971, pp. 33–34)—an appeal of the Tupamaros during their heyday.

Short of abandoning their posts, the servants of the state may prudently curtail their performance. The Greek-Cypriot EOKA made a point of picking off patrols moving in the country to discourage police from advancing outside of towns. "It must be shown," dreams Horst Mahler, "that each employment of the state apparatus . . . against actions of the workers in the enterprises inevitably entails sanctions against the property and the person of those responsible for it" (Mahler 1971, p. 33). Colonel Grivas's intent to make Cypriot policemen "turn a blind eye to our activities" was to be brought about also by murdering highly efficient officials with much publicity (Moss 1972, p. 50). Examples could of course be multiplied, for this as well as the other variants of the calculation envisaged in this section.

II. The Act Itself

Section 11: Not Betraying

Some microviolent ones seem concerned with refuting the suspicion—entertained by others and perhaps also by themselves—that their dedication is limited. One "reason" for "beginning [the activity of the Rote Armee Fraktion] with the liberation of a prisoner [Andreas Baader]," Ulrike Meinhof explains, is "to make it really clear that we are serious (*es ernst meinen*) . . . we are people for whom what we are doing is no game . . ." (*Der Spiegel*, 15 June 1970, p. 74).

I am not falling short of doing what I possibly could. "If we did not resort to violence," a West German recalls, "this would show only our weakness and not at all that it would not be necessary to do so" (*Agit* 883, 18 June 1970). But, precisely, "we recognized . . . the terrible cost of not doing all we possibly can" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 7).

That it may be not much is no excuse for not doing it. "This whole fall

[1969],” a Weatherman declares, “we begin to chip away at imperialism in the most concrete way that we can” (Powers 1971, p. 207). “It’s a message passed on to the ruling class”: thus the British “Angry Brigade” explained its decision to bomb. “Okay, your conspiracy will continue, and the bombs won’t make that much difference to the way it operates.” Yet, “it’s going to be just a little bit more difficult for you,” and “we’re not just going to sit around and produce petitions against what you’re doing” (Carr 1975, p. 64).

Employing violence, I am showing that I am not afraid of it (any more). “We are still scared of fighting. We have to get into armed struggle,” observed Bernardine Dohrn in the fall of 1969 (Powers 1971, p. 170).

We will at least not be resigning ourselves to a lower order of action than that, say, the Vietnamese. “We made the choice to become a guerrilla organization,” the Weather Underground recalls, “at a time when the Vietnamese were fighting a . . . heroic peoples’ war, defeating half a million U.S. troops and the most technologically advanced military power” (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 2).

I shall not be untrue to my beliefs. “The intellectual Left,” Ulrike Meinhof recalls about her first armed action, “has on the whole rejected this action. . . . The intellectuals . . . have come so far as to know that arming oneself is necessary . . . ; but they are people who are not going to take the next step . . . namely to do that of which they talk” (*Der Spiegel*, 15 June 1970, p. 74). “We decided,” the Tupamaros explained, “that our political line should be very simply stated, in restrained language. This was partly a reaction against the verbalism of the Left, but it also responded to a feeling of the people who were long tired of promises and proposals which never came to fruition. For this reason, too, we have never spoken before acting, preferring to communicate our line through action.” (*Generals and Tupamaros* 1944, Introduction). “The hour of action and of commitment here and now,” the same group advanced, “has begun. The hour of conversations of the theoretical enunciation of propositions and of promises which are never realized has ended” (Costs 1972, p. 102).

Engaged in violence, I shall show that I am not a sissy. “I wanted to give him pills,” Andreas Baader’s mother remembers about her twelve-year-old having a toothache, “and to go to the dentist with him. He refused. He said he wanted to test how much pain he could bear”

(*Der Spiegel*, 19 May 1975, p. 38). Recalling that a revolutionary in the underground is “under pressure, after all, to talk to somebody” and that “the effect then becomes cause, that is; the revolutionary considers somebody ‘reliable’ only because he can’t himself keep his mouth shut,” members of the Rote Armee Fraktion comment that “this is naturally related to this shit society which does not develop the force to resist, but rather such shit mechanisms [as the one described].” Indeed, “the devices for rationalizing, for finding the ‘suitable’ motivation for something like that are numberless . . .” [ellipsis dots in the text—NL]; (*Dokumentation* 1975, p. 82).

Employing violence, I prove that I am not unwilling to die for my cause. “The intellectual Left has on the whole rejected this action,” Ulrike Meinhof recalls about the first armed enterprise of her group, “because . . . by virtue of their own class situation they are not capable of making the next step [from seeing the necessity of violence to applying it], . . . because by virtue of their class situation they still have very much to lose, very much of life to lose. Each of them, within his bourgeois existence, has a perspective of life so that there is no objective reason for them to take the step . . .” (*Der Spiegel*, 15 June 1970, p. 47). “That the [armed] struggle (*Kampf*) is . . . not feasible for us,” other West Germans discern, “is an invention of our impulse towards self-preservation” (A leaflet of the group Rotzkast, Mahler 1971, p. 70). “Either pig or human being,” writes a member of the RAF (Holger Meins) during the hunger strike in prison from which he is going to die. “Either survive at any price or fight unto the death. Everybody, after all, dies. The question is only how, and how you have lived. The matter is perfectly clear: fighting against the pigs” (*Der Spiegel*, 18 November 1974, p. 30).

Section 12: Not Submitting

“‘Action,’ ” an observer surmises, “was Andreas Baader’s . . . defense against ‘the danger of being eaten and digested by the system’ ” (Hermann Schreiber, *Der Spiegel*, 19 May 1975, p. 39). “Those who support us,” Baader’s group observes, “know that their petty personal interests (*Kram*) are not worth integration and adaptation for the duration of their life . . .” (*Der Spiegel*, 26 April 1971, p. 32).

“Every man who doesn’t want to go down on his knees to you,” a

British microviolent group addressed USG in the late sixties, “can only reply by . . . direct action to your world terrorist planning” (Carr 1975, p. 61). “We refuse,” said Bernardine Dohrn, at the beginning of the Days of Rage, in an often-employed phrase, “to be good Germans” (Powers 1971, p. 155). “In a time when all actions seem meaningless, at least we won’t be good Germans,” wrote Sam Melville from prison (Melville 1972, p. 140). (The meaning of the phrase extends of course beyond Vietnam.)

Nor will we submit to the moral pressure of the whole of society, from reactionaries to pseudorevolutionaries. “Urban guerrilla,” Ulrike Meinhof discerns, “presupposes . . . being sure that the methods of the *Bildzeitung* are without impact on one, that the syndrome antisemitism—criminality—sub-humanity—murder and arson which they apply to revolutionaries, that the entire shit which continues to influence many comrades in their judgment of us has no impact on one” (Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, pp. 82–83).

Section 13: Avoiding Petty Labor

What other kinds of revolutionary activity hold out some promise of *striking* results obtained by a *few* right now? What other methods are as far removed as microviolence from *Kleinarbeit*, petty work of imperceptible yield?

To the microviolent ones “a few dozen fighters . . . can fundamentally transform the political scene” (Mahler 1971, p. 43).

Less than in conventional political pursuits do I depend on others in microviolence: “Anybody can begin. He does not need to wait for anybody” (ibid., p. 43). “Armed struggle,” the Weather Underground observes, “starts when someone starts it” (Moss 1972, p. 73). “We ask license of no one,” declares Carlos Marighella, “to perform revolutionary actions” (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 74).

While, as we have seen in Section 4, microviolent ones may stress the protracted character of their action—perhaps also so as to subdue impatience—the “notion” is widespread among them “that,” in the words of a Weatherman, “if I don’t . . . construct socialism within twenty years [securely within one’s lifetime—NL], that is a defeat” (Powers 1971, p. 197). “Fire under the ass of all imperialists,” Fritz Teufel inscribed on a poster, “shortens the long march” (*Der Spiegel*,

4 January 1971, p. 48). "The end of the pigs' rule is in sight!" foresaw the first proclamation of the Rote Armee Fraktion (*Der Spiegel*, 18 June 1970, p. 73); "the final moment has arrived (*jetzt ist Schluss*), now the battle starts (*jetzt geht es los*)" (*Der Spiegel*, 22 February 1971, p. 31). "The RAF," paraphrases an Italian microviolent one (Renato Curzio)—in the language of highbrows that he, characteristically, prefers to that of what used to be called the gutter cherished by those he praises—"is a precious patrimony of the entire European Left." For "it has posed . . . the question of the proletarian revolution in a technological-metropolitan society. The chapter seemed closed forever, antagonism eliminated beyond the sphere of politics, the conflict canalized and controlled. But the Baader group . . . combatting in the heart of the metropolis, where few thought it still possible, has put the narcotizing mechanism into crisis" (*L'Espresso*, 2 March 1975, p. 32)—has inspired, among other sequels, a group calling itself "We Want Everything (*Wir Wollen Alles*)"

Section 14: Escaping the Words

"Writing is shit, now let's make revolution," declared Ulrike Meinhof, abandoning her column in a radical-chic periodical (*Konkret*).

"It is not sufficient to talk," affirm the leaders of the RAF, "it is possible and necessary, necessary and possible to *act* [underlined in the text—NL]" (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 55).

Once one has talked, not to act accordingly is a sin (see Section 11). "We have learned," explains a German minister's daughter (Gertrud Ensslin) at her trial for arson, "that talking without activity is wrong" (Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, p. 20).

As well as weak.

As are words by themselves. The first anarchist assassin in late nineteenth-century France (Louis Chaves) had already observed that "it is not with words or paper that we shall change existing conditions" (Woodcock 1962, p. 301). It is by "militant confrontation politics," the Weathermen recall, that "we broke with the powerless past" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 7). "Our power," explains Communiqué No. 7 of Britain's Angry Brigade, "is the six Conservative offices petrol-bombed on January 13, [1971] the Altrincham generator which was blown out . . ." (Carr 1975, p. 102).

Words are worse than vain: while directed against the established order in what they affirm, they may strengthen it through what they effect. "We lived in the fear," Gertrud Ensslin recalls in the statement from which I quoted above, "that verbal protest against the war [in Vietnam] would only serve as an alibi for our society" (Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, p. 20).

Section 15: Really Acting

"It is better," proposes Carlos Marighella, "to err acting than do nothing for fear of erring" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 30). Moreover, "it is better to make mistakes doing something, even if it results in death" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 29).

To be violent may be to prove to oneself and others that one is not bereft of power. "There is," an American confides, "a kind of ecstasy in knowing that you destroyed something, that you were effective. Because all of your life you are told you can't get away with it, you can't beat it, and we beat it" (*Scanlan's Monthly*, January 1971, p. 19).

In fact, one may feel oneself omnipotent: creating microviolence where there was none. "The partisan unit," Horst Mahler shows, "emerges from nothingness (*entsteht aus dem Nichts*)" (Mahler 1971, p. 43).

As the final battle will be a violent one, using violence is to be advanced (see Section 5). "It is an indication of growth," the Weather Underground assesses, "that we are learning [by practice] how to fight" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 3).

Section 16: What Remains But Violence?

"Back in Ann Arbor [at the beginning of the school year of the University of Michigan in the fall of 1968]," an observer reports,

"[Bill] Ayres, Terry Robbins . . . and Jim Mellen made plans to capture control of the sober . . . SDS chapter at the University. . . . The group at first called itself the Lurleen Wallace Memorial Caucus . . . but finally settled on . . . the Jesse James Gang. At the first meeting of Voice-SDS . . . September 25, 1968, the James Gang launched a[n] . . . assault on the old leadership. . . . The gang ridiculed previous SDS campaigns, princi-

pally a year-long organizing attempt to discredit war research carried on at the University of Michigan under the aegis of the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA). . . . Eventually the University's Students' Government Council took up the issue and sponsored a University-wide referendum on the war research affiliation with IDA. The result: a heavy turnout by the School of Engineering and decisive rejection of the SDS proposals. Where did that leave SDS? Ayres wanted to know. Was war research all right now that it had received democratic approval?"

And this Weatherman developed a formula expressing a stance of many a microviolent one: "We are tired of tiptoeing up to society and asking for reform, we are ready to kick it in the balls" (Powers 1971, pp. 87-88). The group that set fire to an IIT subsidiary near Paris on 1 March 1974 as a welcome to the new Chilean ambassador called itself We Must Do Something.

Section 17: One Can Say It Only with a Bomb

When—to take one case among many—on 13 September 1974, a bomb exploded at the office of the Algerian airline in Marseilles, no one claimed responsibility. Presumably it would be clear to everybody concerned that the deed was done by or in the name of Europeans who had left Algeria twelve years before. Probably it was also evident that no nonviolent mode of expression would have seemed adequate to the strength of the feelings and judgments to be conveyed. When a number of American houses in Western Germany were assaulted by fire, unaccompanied by words, a radical student leader remarked that "these actions are not wordless (*sprachlos*), everybody can understand them" (*Der Spiegel*, 29 May 1972, p. 27); as everybody, or almost everybody, could understand that less than violence would not have been adequate to express reactions to violence in Vietnam.

Presumably words today are felt to be a less strong medium than earlier in the century.

Much of the voluminous microbombing of recent years is probably of this expressive kind. The following are a few instances chosen at random:

- May 25, 1972, bombs exploded at the U.S. consulate and at offices of the American Legion, Pan-American World Airways and TWA in Paris.

- April 5, 1973, a bomb exploded in the garden of the U.S. embassy marine guard quarters in Rome, breaking windows and causing moderate structural damage.
- May 1, 1973, a member of the Pakistani Black December group shot at an assistant manager of the Indian Airlines office in Kabul.
- July 1, 1973, a small bomb destroyed the iron gate of the French embassy in Lima, Peru. The bombing was believed to be a protest against the planned French nuclear tests in the Pacific.
- December 15, 1974, bombs exploded outside TWA and Coca-Cola offices in Paris, causing slight damage. On December 16, another bomb exploded at the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, shattering windows. According to a French police statement, the extreme right-wing Youth Action claiming responsibility said that the blasts were a protest against the meeting in Martinique of the presidents of France and the United States.

Those having recourse to microviolence may exaggerate the degree to which the public shares their beliefs and tastes, and hence be all too sparing in their explanations (see Section 1). On 15 September 1974, two persons were killed and thirty-four wounded by a young man who threw a hand grenade into a crowd in the Drugstore Saint-Germain complex in Paris and then escaped. An extreme right-wing organization, the Group for the Defense of Europe, claimed responsibility but did not disclose, for instance, whether it believed American capital to be invested in the complex bearing an American name, or whether it viewed the establishment as a vehicle of the American way of life in France, or both, or something else.

Expressive violence of high intensity may be felt to be particularly appropriate to signifying one's perseverance with regard to an extreme aim that one is suspected (by others as well as oneself) to be tempted to abandon, given the obstacles in its path. "We carried out the operation at Qiryat Shemona," said the Palestinian PFLP-GC about its attack on an apartment house in Israel, "to underline that our liberation struggle is not limited to the West Bank or Gaza, but covers all Palestinian territory" (*Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 April 1974, pp. 138-39).

Section 18: Écrasez l'infâme

"You have nothing more to do with the law except to lay hands on it," said one of the orators (Sam Fielden) on that famous day in Haymarket

Square, "do everything you can to wound it." "When in 1882 a bomb was thrown in the early hours of the morning into a music hall in Lyon," a historian reports, "there were some people, including the police, who regarded this as the . . . fulfillment of an article in an anarchist paper, some months earlier, which said: 'You can see there, especially after midnight, the fine flower of the bourgeoisie and of commerce. . . . The first act of the social revolution must be to destroy this den' " (Joll 1964, p. 130). "I will at least have had the satisfaction," said one of the authors of spectacular violence in that period and country (Auguste Vaillant). "of having wounded existing society" (Guilleminault and Mahé 1963, p. 112). "There is so much to denounce in the system," declared a Québecquois (Pierre Vallières) in the late sixties, "so much to *destroy* [underlined in the text—NL] . . ." (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, p. 329): the earlier sentiments of violent anarchists have been revived.

Destroying may be felt as self-defense: "Wreck what wrecks you (*macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht*). " Or as loving: "love for human beings is today possible only in the death-dealing hate-filled attack on imperialism-fascism" (Ulrike Meinhof, *Der Spiegel*, 2 June 1975, p. 2). Or as an exercise of taste, as when a student coresponsible for burning a branch of the Bank of America in Santa Barbara points out that "it was . . . an ugly building. Esthetically, it was ugly. As one of my friends remarked: 'that fucking thing was so ugly it had to go anyway' " (*Scanlan's Monthly*, January 1971, p. 21). Or destruction may be felt as punishment. The crime sanctioned may be believed to be inevitably committed by anybody who occupies a certain position in society; as when a French anarchist of the late nineteenth century predicted that "when I strike the first bourgeois I encounter, I shall not be striking an innocent" (Joll 1964, p. 117); or as when a famous man of violence of the epoch (Émile Henry) more pithily declared: "Nobody is innocent." The punishment may, specifically, be inflicted on those who had previously damaged proponents of microviolence. "We decided," a Montonero reports on a certain moment in his group's history, "to leave our anonymous stage . . . behind. It was time to stop mourning our dead. It was time for the others to do some of the dying; it was time for the enemy to receive some of the grief" (Hodges and Abu Shanab 1972, p. 310).

All the more as some of the others are scarcely human. "People," declares Ulrike Meinhof about intellectual revolutionaries rejecting the

RAF, “have no difficulty, when talking about the Panthers, to use their words for cops (*Bullen*), namely the word pigs (*Schweine*). But they do not apply this word to the police which they encounter themselves.” As to Ulrike Meinhof, “we say, naturally, the *Bullen* are *Schweine*. . . . The guy in uniform is a *Schwein*, that is, not a human being (*Mensch*). . . .” Hence “we don’t have to with him”; in fact, “it is wrong” to do so, but “naturally one can shoot (*kann geschossen werden*)” (*Der Spiegel*, 15 June 1970, p. 75). I have never heard that a policeman is a human being, the late nineteenth-century German Johannes Most had already observed (Laqueur 1976, p. 147).

Similar feelings may be entertained about the unpaid, indeed “exploited” supporters of the status quo in the lower-middle and lower strata of the population. The classical case here is the bombing, in the late nineteenth century, of a café near the Gare St. Lazare in Paris. “One must strike the bourgeois,” explained the author of the deed, “but also all those who are content with the present order, those employees with a salary of 300 francs a month who applaud the acts of the government, who hate the people even more than the big bourgeois . . . the habitual clientèle of the Terminus. They all have rejoiced about the death of Vaillant. That is why I have hit them” (Émile Henry at his trial, Guilleminault and Mahé 1963, p. 121).

Killing and wounding some fortunately entails spoiling the pleasures of many for long. “I wanted to show the bourgeoisie,” Émile Henry added, “that their pleasures would no longer be complete . . . their triumphs would be disturbed” (Joll 1964, p. 137). The Tupamaros destroyed Uruguay’s only bowling club, Montevideo’s golf club, and several fashionable night clubs.

Or the target may be one of the innumerable material vehicles of the exploitation/oppression to which the few supposedly subject the many. “We set fire to department stores,” Andreas Baader and Gertrud Ensslin explained in a note they had intended to leave in the places of their first deed (in Frankfurt, 2 April 1968), “so that you cease buying.” For “the constraint to consume (*Konsumzwang*) terrorizes you” (*Der Spiegel*, 5 June 1972, p. 23)—the victim is the terrorist.

Section 19: It’s Fun

“It’s fun,” exclaims Sam Melville at the thought of violence (Melville 1972, p. 140).

Perhaps the only fun left. "Brothers and sisters," asks Communiqué 8 of Britain's Angry Brigade, "what are your real desires? Sit in the drugstore, look distant, empty, bored, drinking some tasteless coffee? Or perhaps BLOW IT UP OR BURN IT DOWN . . . just kick it till it breaks" (Carr 1975, p. 104; capitals in the text).

In the late twentieth century, fun and duty are probably mingled as they were almost a hundred years ago among French anarchists:

Danse, dynamite
danse, danse vite
dansons et chantons
dynamitons, dynamitons

Dansons la Ravachole
vive le son, vive le son
dansons la Ravachole
vive le son
de l'explosion

Nos pères ont jadis dansé
au son du canon du passé.
Maintenant la danse tragique
veut une plus forte musique:
dynamitons, dynamitons

Section 20: If You Can Bring It Off, Do It

"We have established ourselves in the Left," observes a Brazilian about his group, "by proving the *possibility* of an armed organization in Brazil, but not yet the political *efficacy* of armed struggle" (Jamil Rodriguez, *Les Temps Modernes*, March 1971, p. 1589). How right this militant was to allude to the tendency toward "confusing," in the words of a friendly critic (João Quartim), "the military possibility of an action with its political correctness" (Kohl and Litt, 1974, p. 159) becomes apparent when we hear from the Rote Armee Fraktion that "the question whether it is correct (*richtig*) to organize armed . . . resistance groups in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin is the question whether it is possible to do so." It follows that "the answer can

only be ascertained practically.” That is, “some comrades have resolved to engage in this enterprise. By this it will be shown whether there are enough persons, enough . . . energy, enough shrewdness, enough discipline . . . available . . . so as to be able actually (*tatsächlich*) to attack imperialism in the . . . Federal Republic and West Berlin.” When affirming that “only opportunists could dismiss the liberation of Baader as adventurous, putschist, anarchist,” the Rote ArmeeFraktion offers the novel proof we would now expect: “success showed that the operation was executed with a correct evaluation of our own and the pigs’ forces . . .” (Baader-Meinhof Report 1972, p. 158).

Where so many doubt whether microviolence can be brought into existence at all in an environment in which it has been absent for some time, the very feat of producing that strange and striking means of production may suggest its high productivity for the consumer good intended, the Revolution. “In the last analysis and contrary to the opinion of many,” the Tupamaros exult upon having abducted the director-general of the telephone and power company, “even in this country it is possible to counter the ruling sector’s repression with direct action” (Wilson 1974, p. 44).

It is possible, but it takes most of one’s energy. When the sister of an imprisoned RAF militant (Gudrun Ensslin) objects to her that “in comparison with the laborious work of the Left placing bombs is simple,” she draws the retort: “Do you have any idea of how difficult it was to place bombs?” (*Der Spiegel*, 24 July 1972, p. 62). A statement of her group mentions the “laborious, lengthy work on details (*Kleinarbeit*) of the urban guerrilla . . .” (*Der Spiegel*, 24 April 1972, p. 83)—work that, as we have seen, also bears the opposite character (Section 13). “His principal duty . . . to attack and survive” (Carlos Marighella, in Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 89) may absorb him to the detriment of a continued inquiry into impacts. “He told of lice [listening devices] which hang from the windows,” a temporary militant of the RAF (Beate Sturm) reminisced about Andreas Baader. “If one talks, then at best only in a moving car—that drowns out the lice. As in a real American detective story . . . what we really wanted, that question we did not put to ourselves clearly any more” (*Der Spiegel*, 7 February 1972, p. 57). On the question “where this armed struggle is leading,” the prevailing opinion among the Tupamaros seems to have been that “armed struggle thinks with its own head” (Wilson 1974, p. 66).

III. Prospects

All the favorable forecasts about the impact of microviolence (Part I) and all its intrinsic attractions (Part II) may not quench the dismay aroused by the awareness that, in Bernardine Dohrn's words, "most of our actions have hurt the enemy on about the same military level as a bee-sting" (Moss 1972, p. 74). Focusing on the "here and now," the microviolent ones are also moved to go beyond it in space and time.

Section 21: Elsewhere

"You have hanged men in Chicago," a prominent microviolent one in late nineteenth-century France (Émile Henry) addressed the existing order at his trial, "cut off their heads in Germany, strangled them in Jerez, shot them in Barcelona, guillotined them in Montbrison and Paris . . ." (Joll 1964, p. 138). Similar words have been pronounced more recently to subdue the sense of the microviolent that they are small, perhaps insignificant.

"One small group"—such as the speaker's own—"is nothing," a Brazilian admits. "But we know that people are forming small groups all over the world . . ." (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 146); the result, no doubt larger than the sum, is formidable.

All the more as some of these "groups" are big. When a news-magazine queries the imprisoned leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion whether "you want to . . . remain cadres and bring about the revolution by going it alone or whether you still believe that you will be able to mobilize proletarian masses," the answer is that "it is silly to attribute to us the intent to 'go it alone,' given the state of the contemporary anti-imperialist battle in Asia, Latin America, Africa, in Vietnam, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina. There are also in Western Europe not only the RAF but also the IRA, ETA, [and only now—NL] groups engaged in armed combat in Italy, in Portugal, in England" (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, pp. 55–56). Upon the question asked a Weatherwoman by her sister, "when blue collar workers are making \$6 an hour, where is the support coming from?" the militant replied that "the revolution is already taking place. It's a worldwide thing" (Powers 1971, p. 163).

A small microviolent group in an advanced country can, in case of need, always view itself as a mere auxiliary, albeit a precious one, of a

big group in a less-developed area (see Section 7). "In Hanoi," claim the leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion, "there were fotos of us in the streets, because the bombing in Heidelberg, for which the RAF has taken responsibility, has destroyed the computer with which the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam was calculated and directed" (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 57).

In this function of external support, a *positive* yield, however small, may seem assured to any microviolent group in an advanced country—a yield that, given the priority given to the big struggle elsewhere, may be believed to be certainly higher than a possibly negative impact at home. As a result, then, there is no risk of being counterproductive. "If . . . the basic struggle in the world today is the struggle of the oppressed people against U.S. imperialism," a Weatherman demonstrates, "then nothing we could do in the mother country could be adventurist" (Powers 1971, pp. 194–95).

Section 22: Later

We may be small now, but that is just because "we are at an early stage, going from small to large" (*Prairie Fire* 1974, p. 2). "We are all," an Argentinian declares about the several armed groups in the country, "embryos of the People's Army" (*Les Temps Modernes*, April 1972, pp. 1557–58). The Turkish People's Liberation Army admits, when capturing four U.S. airmen, that "today" it is "a handful of fighters" and predicts that "tomorrow" it "will become thousands and millions."

"I would like the glory," the first anarchist assassin in late nineteenth-century France confided, "of being the first to start" (Woodcock 1962, p. 301). What glory indeed, in our days, to make oneself into a first like the first in Ching Kan Shan (1927), the Aurès Mountains (1954), the Sierra Maestra (1956). "We are," the Rote Armee Fraktion announced its birth, "the first regular units of the Red Army . . ." (*Der Spiegel*, 31 January 1972, p. 59).

If we are fated to grow, it is, however, only because we start out with violence. "An armed group, no matter how small," the Tupamaros explain, "has greater possibilities for converting itself into a . . . popular army than a group that limits itself to revolutionary positions" (Wilson 1974, p. 57). "It is"—it is only—"revolutionary action" that, in a formula of the same group, "precipitates revolutionary action"

(Moss 1972, p. 218). When a spokesman of the group was asked to "give . . . [an] example illustrating the [Tupamaro] principle that revolutionary action generates revolutionary consciousness, organization and conditions," he of course replied that, "Cuba is an example. In place of the long process of forming a Party of the masses, a guerrilla foco of a dozen men was installed, and this deed generated revolutionary consciousness, organization and conditions" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 227).

It is not only compatible with eventual victory to start out tiny, it is indispensable to do so (see Section 5): in Raoul Castro's formula, the big motor of the Revolution requires a small motor to get started.

There may be a leap already tomorrow. The October Manifesto of the Front de Libération du Québec broadcast in Montreal on 8 October 1970 foresaw the imminence of "100,000 revolutionary workers, armed and organized, flooding into the streets of Montreal" (Moss 1972, p. 126).

Or it will take a long time, but we will get there—always on condition that there be at least some violence from the start. "Future actions, beyond the conspiracy level," the Tupamaros foresee, "will be but the first step in a revolutionary war. It won't be a quick war . . . but a slow . . . protracted struggle." Yet this "should not be a reason to postpone action until a quick victory is insured, for [in that case] it will never arrive." Therefore, without delay, "the 'little motor' must be started" (Wilson 1974, p. 70); and it must be little. "You start with one to reach a hundred, as the saying goes," the French anarchist quoted above recalled (Woodcock 1962, p. 301).

If you refuse starting tiny, you will never grow big. Considering the "contradiction" of the "system" that "affirms that there are no political prisoners, while they do of course exist," the imprisoned leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion affirm "that" to be "the piece of ground . . . from which . . . we can do what we want to do: enlarge it." On the other hand, "if we do surrender this little piece of ground from . . . dismay (*Bestürzung*) about the fact that it is so small, then beautiful socialism will, naturally, always remain a beautiful cloud" (*Dokumentation* 1975, p. 163). The same holds true for violence.

Section 23: Soon

One may hide doubts about microviolence from oneself and others by presenting aspirations toward a capacity for small war; for that kind of

war presents fewer problems except, alas, that of being strong enough to conduct one. "The only important point," observes Carlos Marighella (choosing a formulation that may suggest that the desirable is also feasible) "is to increase substantially the volume of urban guerrilla activity in order to *wear out* the government . . ." (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 99)—to be sure, once you can do that, you have it made. But what if you can't? "It is necessary," Horst Mahler observes (again in a fashion that suggests realization and not only requirement, though the former be arduous and the latter obvious), "to develop numerous groups of partisans in all major population centers in order to force the enemy already in the phase of creation to disperse his forces and to overload his intelligence apparatus" (Mahler 1971, p. 31). From prison Andreas Baader demands that his shattered group revive, "if possible," in the shape of "eight to ten guys (*Typen*) in every major city" with "one center in the city and three to five apartments" (*Der Spiegel*, 25 November 1974, p. 33).

Aspirations may go beyond small war to big war. For Carlos Marighella "the armed struggle of the urban guerrilla points towards two essential objectives: 1. the physical liquidation of the chief and assistants of the armed forces and the police . . ." (Kohl and Litt 1974, p. 92). "Our next leap," declare the Tupamaros about to die, "is to destroy the living forces of the enemy . . ." (Wilson 1974, p. 159).

Beyond inflating one's aspirations one may magnify one's forces. While "you speak of the fact that some of us are imprisoned," the leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion observe to hostile journalists, "you do not speak of the political cost to the . . . State of . . . the hunt for *only a small* RAF unit" (*Der Spiegel*, 20 January 1975, p. 57). When on 3 March 1968 six bombs went off within minutes of each other in six locations in Turin, The Hague, and London, the forces of the British Revolutionary Solidarity Movement, First of May Group (Carr 1975, p. 61) should perhaps appear larger than they were to the microviolent ones themselves as well as to whomever else paid attention. The "Chénier" cell of the Front de Libération du Québec, having kidnapped a province minister, also signed communications using the names "Vigier" and "Dieppe"; whereas each of the six bombings of the Rote Armee Fraktion in May 1972 was signed by a different name (*Der Spiegel*, 24 June 1974, p. 29). In more exacting fashion—and then probably also more for self-delusion—a microviolent group may painstakingly prepare for a scale of operations well beyond its foreseeable resources.

Thus the Rote Armee Fraktion established approximately 500 files on West German citizens to kill or abduct, with addresses, telephone numbers, indications about families and affairs, habitual bars and restaurants (*Der Spiegel*, 10 March 1975, p. 25). According to an attorney general of the state of California a captured SLA list of more than 900 targets showed that "they probably had a better library than many police departments . . ." (Evelle Younger, Hearing, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, 23 September 1974, p. 22).

Beyond such disproportionate preparations, plans of operations may be exaggerated.

One may pretend to oneself and others that one is actually engaged in producing an attrition of the enemy force, as in small war. "Its purpose," the Tupamaros say in an internal document about "terror and sabotage," "is to lessen their [the enemy's] *capacity* for repression," which is to be achieved by "interrupting their communications, damaging their property . . ." (Wilson 1974, p. 76)—obviously, in considerable amounts. From prison Ulrike Meinhof orders a "daily schedule: I. Daily militant action against installations of the State, of the monopolies (industry, commerce, banks) and of the U.S. occupants . . ." (*Der Spiegel*, 2 June 1975, p. 29; emphasis in the text). Establishing a "small attack strategy for Northern Germany," a document of the Rote Armee Fraktion begins with a "first step," Hamburg: "Monday morning, setting two fires in each of the following department stores: Karstadt, Keta, Horten, Kaufhalle, Kaufhof"; then goes on to "Bremen: in the night from Monday to Tuesday one attempt with dynamite against the Spanish consulate." The "second step" still concerns Bremen: "Tuesday morning two attacks with fire in each of the following department stores: Hertie, Karstadt, Horten." Still within the "second step" is Kiel—and so on until the sixth (*Dokumentation* 1975, p. 84). While "to ambush and annihilate enemy contingents" is a difficult maneuver for a rural guerrilla, to do, the Tupamaros allege it "will be a simple and daily operation for the urban guerrilla" (Costa 1972, p. 252).

From an objective that is still of small war—"the principal task of the urban guerrilla is . . . to wear out . . . the military dictatorship"—one (in this instance, Carlos Marighella) may rise to a purpose of big war: ". . . and also to . . . destroy the wealth and property of the North Americans . . . and the Brazilian upper class" (Kohl and Litt 1974, p.

89). In the late nineteenth century in Paris, Ravachol—who acted alone and asserted, “We are one hundred, we are one thousand in Paris who can do as much”—having dynamited two houses inhabited by a prosecutor and a judge respectively, affirmed that “a provision of dynamite has been distributed which is sufficient for every house lodging a judge to explode in the near future” (Guilleminault and Mahé 1963, p. 69). “If one truck with Springer papers is set on fire,” Horst Mahler observes, “that is arson.” But “if all Springer trucks burn, that is a political action” (*Der Spiegel*, 22 February 1971, p. 28)—indeed, that is civil war; but *can* you make them all burn, or even many? It was at the very last of the six famous bombings by the Rote Armee Fraktion in May 1972 that the group asked “the militants in the Federal Republic and West Berlin to make . . . *all* American installations into targets of their attack” (*Der Spiegel*, 24 June 1974, pp. 29–30). “The suicide commandos of the FLQ,” a notice to the population of Quebec announced seven and a half years before the kidnappings that made that group famous, “are aiming principally at the *complete* destruction by sabotage of the colonial institutions, of *all* means of communication in the colonial language, of *the* enterprises . . . practicing discrimination against the Québécois. The FLQ will proceed to eliminate *all* persons collaborating with the occupant” (Morf 1971, p. 4). “In summation,” observed an internal document of the Tupamaros shortly before they were destroyed in 1972, “to commence hostilities directly and systematically must become the immediate concrete task on which we must concentrate all our energy. This must be calculated with military precision. WE MUST HAVE OUR ‘D’ DAY (this last sentence in capital initials—NL) . . . To succeed we must defeat the armed forces. We propose a systematic and selective attack on them . . . The [Organization’s] Information Service about the Armed Forces can propose to the Organization . . . objectives for military action to destroy the moral and material forces of the enemy” (Wilson 1974, p. 163). “Our next leap”—and “we have been looking for the . . . possibilities of ‘leaping’ since 1970”—is “to destroy the living forces of the enemy” (Wilson 1974, p. 154)—rather than, as happened, having one’s own living forces destroyed by the enemy. The reality of microviolence disappears behind the aspiration toward a big war, even a preamble to a plan for it.

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